

the *Archives* consists of Drs. Joseph L. Miller, Richard C. Cabot, David Edsall, George Dock, Theo. C. Janeway and W. S. Thayer. Checks, etc., should be made payable to the American Medical Association, 103 Dearborn avenue, Chicago.

On December 28th, a meeting of the Council of the State Society was called for the purpose of considering the presence of plague in California and whether or not the State Society could do anything to aid in the fight against it.

After a full discussion, the Council authorized the President, Dr. George H. Evans, to appoint a special committee of five to aid the local society and to endeavor to secure the co-operation of the various civic and commercial bodies, which up to that time had done nothing in the work of fighting the infection. This committee called a meeting in the hall of the California Club on the evening of January 18th and invited the directors of all the commercial organizations, Mayor, Supervisors, etc., to attend. At first sight of the audience, doubtless the committee were discouraged, for only some sixty persons seemed to be sufficiently interested to attend. But, fortunately, there were quite a number of the Merchants' Association present, and the facts expounded before them at once aroused their deep interest. They arranged for and called a meeting of business men on January 28th, on the floor of the Merchants' Exchange, and some six hundred men attended. Existing facts were explained by Dr. Rupert Blue of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, and others interested in the work, and both the Governor and the Mayor spoke in no uncertain terms of the dangers of the present situation and from the ignorance and apathy of the people. The necessity for the co-operation of the press was urged and resolutions to that effect were passed. These, coming from the merchants, who support the papers, had a very salutary effect and at last a modicum of publicity has been secured; even the poor *Examiner* stopped speaking in vague phrase of the presence of "contagion" in the city; it hated the word plague. At this meeting a committee of twenty-five, thirteen laymen and twelve physicians, was appointed by the Mayor to co-operate in the work and to stimulate public interest, etc. Up to the end of January, there has been no case of human plague in San Francisco for about a month, though the percentage of infected rats has risen steadily until it is over one and one-half per cent. This seems small until one remembers that even in severe epidemics the percentage of infected rats does not exceed six or seven per cent of those examined, and has been as low as two per cent. The Public Health and Marine Hospital Service laboratory is being enlarged and will soon be in a position to examine all rats obtained. Fleas are very scarce in the city, owing to the cold and rainy weather, and that accounts for the falling off of cases of human plague. With the return of warm weather—and fleas—we may expect to see an increase in the number of human cases.

In almost every state in the Union one or more publications, claiming to be published in the interests of the medical profession, are issued at regular intervals; they are classed as "medical" periodicals and are supposed to represent the interests of medical men.

#### ABOUT JOURNALS.

With the exception of the *Journal of the A. M. A.*, the various state association journals, and a few issued by county societies, all are published primarily for profit and are owned either by publishing houses, pharmaceutical manufacturers, or private physicians. In some instances the smaller journals are really published at a financial loss, but this is made up to the owner by the books which he receives for review and which naturally are favorably commented upon in his journal. One could very easily designate scores of journals of this class in which no "book review" giving an unfavorable opinion of a book, no matter how bad a work it may really be, has ever appeared. When periodicals are profitable, the profit comes not from the subscriptions but from the advertisements. Anything that is calculated to reduce the quantity of advertisements in such a publication may naturally be assumed to be objectionable to the proprietor, for he dislikes to have his income reduced. This is almost too simple to need the saying. When the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the A. M. A. was organized, probably 75 per cent of the advertisements in "medical" journals were of articles which had gained recognition by medical men on account of the mystery by which they had been surrounded by the skillful writer of the advertising matter relating to them. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. "Anarsarcine" was written up as a *cure for dropsy*, though the things which composed it and which permitted it to *cure dropsy*, were carefully concealed from the physician. "Germiletum" was solemnly declared to be "a *specific* for catarrh," though how or why, we are not informed. Some things—notably the Lawrence line of nostrums—were, to accept the statements of the manufacturer, and these were the only statements available, capable of curing almost anything in a mysterious but most reliable manner. There were numerous mixtures of acetanilid, under fanciful names, such as antikamnia, phenalgine, sal-codeia, etc., which were said to be—by the manufacturers—*new* and most potently valuable chemical substances with merits only limited by the imagination of the "adsmith" or the extent of lie for which the manufacturer's conscience would stand. The investigations of the Council rent the veil of mystery and disclosed the fraudulent claims for composition or therapeutic marvelousness.

The *Journal of the A. M. A.*, and some of the state association journals, published these disclosures and resented the fact that they had been imposed upon and lied to; also, they refused to advertise the frauds, even though the money was "good" and promptly forthcoming. With

#### AND OTHER JOURNALS.